To the OFFICERS of the ROYAL NAVY, MERCHANTS, SHIP-OWNERS, OFFICERS of the CUSTOMS, and Others connected with our MARITIME STATE.

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THE

SPIRIT OF MARINE LAW,

OR

Compendium of the Statutes

RELATING TO

THE ADMIRALTY;

BEING A CONCISE BUT PERSPICUOUS ABRIDGMENT OF ALL THE ACTS

RELATIVE TO

NAVIGATION.

ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED,

AND THE SUBSTANCE AND REFERENCES TO THE SEVERAL CLAUSES PLACED IN THE MARGIN.

By JOHN IRVING MAXWELL,

OF THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF THE INNER TEMPLE, AND LATE OF THE ROYAL NAVY.

AT a period when our Navigation and Commerce are ſo flouriſhing as at once to outſtrip compariſon and to defy competition, a Publication, profeſſedly calculated to diffuſe a more general knowledge of thoſe Laws and Regulations, by which Great Britain has attained to ſuch an unparalleled elevation of Commercial Splendour and Naval Renown, cannot but be an object of general and particular intereſt: It is an object of general intereſt, as far as relates to thoſe, who, comparatively leſs the immediate object of the operation of theſe Acts, may be nevertheleſs deſirous of acquiring a knowledge of the Marine Code of the firſt Maritime and Commercial State upon this Globe; and it will be found particularly intereſting, and of peculiar utility, to thoſe numerous and reſpectable claſſes of individuals, whether conſidered as Merchants, Ship Owners, Officers of the Revenue, and others, who, intereſted and bound by the operation of theſe Acts, may find it neceſſary to conſult the Marine Laws, as a Practical Guide in their ſeveral and reſpective ſpheres of avocation.

But not only to the *Merchant*, the *Ship Owner*, the *Officer of the Cuſtoms*, and every other claſs of individuals, immediately or remotely connected with the maritime ſtate, but in a very peculiar degree to the OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY, a Work of this nature will be found moſt uſeful; for to this latter valuable claſs of individuals, a knowledge of theſe Laws has hitherto been of difficult acquirement.

In the Statutes relating to the Admiralty (the only publication which bears any reſemblance to the preſent), the Heads introduced are not ſo numerous, nor of ſuch extenſive intereſt as thoſe which have been here detailed; neither is the volume ſo portable, or its contents ſo eaſy of reference.

It is well known, that the quarto Volume containing the Statutes relating to the Admiralty, and the information therein contained, is confined only to the *Flag Officers and Commanders of his Majesty's Navy*: the intent, therefore, of the present Publication, is to communicate to every description of persons in the ROYAL NAVY a knowledge of those Laws by which their interests may be affected; those Laws which they are sometimes called to enforce, and which, as at all times they are bound to obey, they must be guilty of culpable negligence if they do not endeavour to understand.

This Publication, therefore, may be considered as a compendious MARINE LAW LIBRARY, where all the most interesting Heads of Marine Law are selected and alphabetically arranged; containing a greater Variety of Topics than is to be found in the Statutes relating to the Admiralty, and rendering accessible to all, that knowledge of Marine Jurisprudence, which, according to the present regulations, has been confined to a particular description of individuals.

As all Books, which are intended to convey practical Instruction, ought to possess such a Facility of Reference that the required information may be almost instantaneously communicated, the Alphabetical Order of Arrangement has been adopted, and the Clauses and numerical References to the several Acts placed in the Margin; so that this Volume, whilst it contains all the Substance of the Statutes of the Admiralty, detached from the technical phraseology of Legislation, may serve as a copious Index to those who wish more minutely either to consult the Collection of Statutes relating to the Admiralty, or the more numerous volumes of the Statutes at Large.

The several Acts of Parliament relating to each Head, which is a distinct Abstract of the Laws relative to that subject, have been traced in chronological order from their commencement down to the present time, and a brief Prefatory Exordium has been prefixed to each Head; so that those Improvements which legislative Wisdom has from time to time introduced, may be traced progressively from the period of their commencement down to the present distinguished Æra of Naval Glory and Commercial Prosperity, which is at once the awe and astonishment of the World.

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